

Meeting of 2000-5-30 Special Meeting - Budget

MINUTES
LAWTON CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 30, 2000 - 6:00 P.M.
WAYNE GILLEY CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER

Mayor Cecil E. Powell, Also Present:
Presiding Bill Baker, City Manager
 John Vincent, City Attorney
 Brenda Smith, City Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Powell. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by State Law.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: G. Wayne Smith, Ward One
 James H. Hanna, Ward Two
 Glenn Devine, Ward Three
 John Purcell, Ward Four
 Robert Shanklin, Ward Five
 Barbara Moeller, Ward Six
 Stanley Haywood, Ward Seven
 Michael Baxter, Ward Eight

ABSENT: None.

ADDENDUM BUSINESS ITEM:

1. Pursuant to Section 307B2, Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes, consider convening in executive session to discuss negotiations for a Collective Bargaining Agreement for FY 2000-2001 between the Fire Union, IAFF, Local 1882, and the City of Lawton, and take appropriate action in open session. Exhibits: None.

MOVED by Devine, SECOND by Baxter, to convene in executive session as shown on the agenda and recommended by the legal staff. AYE: Devine, Purcell, Shanklin, Moeller, Haywood, Baxter, Smith, Hanna. NAY: None. MOTION CARRIED.

The Mayor and Council convened in executive session at approximately 6:02 p.m. and reconvened in open session at approximately 6:35 p.m. with roll call reflecting all members present.

Vincent reported executive session was held pursuant to Section 307B2, Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes, to discuss negotiations for a Collective Bargaining Agreement for FY 2000-2001 between the Fire Union, IAFF, Local 1882, and the City of Lawton. He said no action is required at this time.

BUSINESS ITEM:

1. Discuss the Preliminary City of Lawton Budget for FY 2000-2001 and provide direction to staff. Exhibits: None. (Preliminary Budget was previously distributed)

Baker reviewed items from the last budget meeting, and Council direction was provided, as follows:

1. Pay adjustments for Bailiff and Deputy City Clerk - will address with other recommendations at June 13, Council meeting. No action needed at this time.
2. Pleasant Valley Senior Citizen Center - can expand programs by changing a 20 hour/week part-time to full-time, estimated cost \$16,299. Operation of other senior citizen centers was discussed and this addition will allow the B.O. Davis Center and Pleasant Valley to be open on Fridays. Council indicated a desire to fund this item.
3. Arts Coordinator, Arts & Humanities - Preliminary Budget included funds to change from 6 hours/week to 30 hours/week. Additional cost to make permanent, full-time would be \$7,000. Council indicated a desire to fund this item.
4. Add \$12,000 to Communication's 106, part-time account - Council tentatively approved on May 22. No action needed at this time.

5. Delete \$8,000 from Street Division, Account 321 for 40th & Lee project. Recommend designating \$8,000 for the Bark Avenue road project, previously approved by Council, leaving funds in Street Division budget. Council approved this item.

6. Neighborhood Services - Request \$14,000 for hire of part-time employees, weed abatement program. Funds for part-time to be expended from Code Admin budget for duration of current fiscal year. Funds required to retain part-time employees for the periods July-September 2000 and April-June 2001. The part-time employees will be used for clerical work; one will research ownership and the other will do administrative orders. The clerks being referred to are not connected with the City Clerk's Office. Dan Tucker, Code Administration Director, said the job advertisement for the positions closes tomorrow; the backlog of work orders has gone down due to employees working overtime.

Shanklin asked if the codes are being aggressively enforced or if it is only on a complaint basis. Tucker said it is on a complaint basis for all items other than high grass and weeds. Shanklin asked about junk cars that have been parked in one location for many months, especially on busy streets. Tucker said the only thing they would do without a specific complaint would be grass and weeds. Smith said that direction was given by Council. Shanklin said the direction was to not give a ticket for the first offense but it did not say to ignore the violation. Shanklin said an elderly man got a ticket for \$250 for debris, the money was not refunded, and he got the ticket only because he answered his door, and those who did not answer the door received only a notice. Shanklin said the direction was for inspectors to tell people to abate violations of the code and if not, then they get a citation. Tucker said the instruction at that time was to give a citation if a violation was found, then later instruction was to notify a person of a violation and then after the time had lapsed and they had not abated, then a citation would be issued. Shanklin said that was just what he said and Tucker said that is what they do. Baker said he could provide a copy of the code enforcement philosophy Council had approved and staff is to be working under.

Moeller said when these people are hired, someone needs to follow through to be sure they are trained properly in searching out the owners. She said she received a complaint today from a gentleman who got a letter and he has not owned the house in two years. Moeller said the clerks at the Courthouse are great to help out on that.

Baxter said he did not think a citizen should have to call in a complaint and that staff should go ahead with telling people if a violation should be corrected. Shanklin said his point was people should not be given a ticket just because they answer the door, but now we are not doing anything and that was the reason for his question.

Mayor Powell suggested the policy be provided for Council review and that it was not Council's intent for inspectors to see something in violation but just drive by and let it go. Devine said if someone wants to change the policy that staff will copy for Council, they could ask that it be placed on the agenda.

7. Lease of backhoes or other equipment - will pursue this as an option next fiscal year to compare cost to purchase. Baker said when bids are advertised next year, prices for leasing will also be requested, and a comparison will be presented to Council. This will not be done for all equipment but will be done for backhoes and certain items. Shanklin said he was speaking of heavy duty construction equipment. Mayor Powell suggested a history of maintenance problems be included to allow Council to make a good decision.

8. Employee Advisory Committee

a. Additional 1.5% contribution to General Employee Retirement Fund. Cost \$231,100. Shared cost with employees \$139,805. Can defer until next year.

b. 3.8% cost of living - estimated cost \$696,517. 3%, or \$549,882, is currently included in the preliminary budget.

c. Add fixed holiday - Friday after Thanksgiving - estimated cost due to overtime requirements, \$6,211/year.

Baker said the EAC representative is present and could be recognized for a presentation later.

9. Mass Transit - first year cost \$285,000. Funding source unidentified. Baker said it is a large cost and would be hard to fund but if Council desired, he could look at including it.

Haywood spoke in favor of including the costs. Shanklin said those in Certified Cities spent a lot of time and resources on the study and if Lawton is in the league with 100,000 population, it should have a mass transit program, and he had no problem taking it to a vote of the people.

Baxter said he thought mass transit was needed but that he could not recommend putting it in this year's budget and would like to bring it to a vote of the people. Baker said to include \$285,000 in the budget for mass transit would mean cutting that amount somewhere else.

Purcell said the question of mass transit has been discussed for about 15 years and every survey shows it to be the number one need of the community. He said some are concerned that mass transit would not be used and it would have to be more heavily subsidized than originally thought. Purcell said they would have to either agree to come up with the \$285,000 for the first year then \$180,000 per year for the next five to six years to see if it works, and if so, wonderful, and if not, a lot of money will have been used where it will not have done a lot of good. He said the other option is to ask the people whether we want to increase the taxes by a certain percent to cover that cost, but one way or another, something should be done and we should not wait another year.

Baxter supported placing the question on the ballot. Devine agreed. Moeller agreed with a vote of the people. She said nothing requires that the entire system be established, and that she would like to know the real needs. She said if it is approved, funding must be available for it. Baker asked the City Planner to distribute the transit plan, which was done, and said it could be considered during the course of the next fiscal year.

Shanklin suggested it be placed on the ballot or take the \$285,000 out of the rolling stock \$3 charge that is already on the water bill. He said there will come a time when we are replacing new pickups with new pickups, and we have had the fund for four or five years and most of the equipment being driven now is certainly not dilapidated. Shanklin said the \$3 fee provides \$1.2 million per year, so there would still be adequate funds available if those funds were used for mass transit.

Moeller said she would like to hear what alternative sources of funding were available without a tax increase. Shanklin said he knew of no way other than adding a surcharge, but the funds are already there. Mayor Powell said a surcharge is a tax any way you look at it. Shanklin said citizens are already paying that surcharge.

Mayor Powell said a transit service is operational in Muskogee and he suggested staff visit there to get information that may be helpful.

Purcell said we should be very careful about taking money out of the funds we have put aside to replace equipment. He said the problem was very bad a few years ago and the only way to fund the equipment purchases was through a CIP. Purcell said it took several years to get out of the problem, and perhaps the funds are not being spent on the right equipment, but he would not support cutting down the amount of equipment being purchased so we can do something else with the money. He said in three or four years, everything will be worn out and we will not have replaced it. Shanklin said \$200,000 will not make you or break you, and that there was no basis for the \$3 charge, and it could have been \$2 or \$4. Shanklin said it should not be a problem to take \$200,000 out of \$1.2 million. Purcell said it will be \$285,000 this year and more money each year, and at some point, you have to start replacing the buses; they are paid for through federal funds the first time but after that, the City must replace them and a funding source would be needed.

Purcell said the City got in a bind by taking money that was needed to replace equipment and using it for other needs. He said those funds could be used for trash trucks if pickups were not needed, but Council should be careful about using that source or they would be in the same predicament they were in before that took about three years to get out of.

Shanklin asked if \$200,000 out of that fund would leave us on wheels and rims. Purcell said no, this would be the first thing coming out of it and then it would be the cash cow for everything that needs to be done, which has been the problem in the past.

Mayor Powell asked for direction to the City Manager on mass transit. Shanklin said forget it. Haywood said in 1998, before he came on, Council passed having a mass transit system. He said we had the money back in the spring time but gave it to the general employees and he knew then that those were the funds for mass transportation that Baker had set aside. Haywood said if he had to do it over again and he wanted mass transit, he would have given the raise to the general employees but would rather have used the funds for mass transit. Haywood said the surveys show mass transit as a need and people impress that on him. He said the Transportation Policy Committee has worked hard on this issue and it is up to the Council to decide.

Purcell suggested bringing it back as an agenda item so action can be taken to put it on the ballot in November so a decision can be made. Shanklin said he had no problem with that but also felt \$200,000 from rolling stock would not cause a problem.

10. Five (5) year cost of General Employee salary increase approved during FY 99-00.

Baker said the costs for five and ten years for the salary increases given to general employees this fiscal year, to include the new pay plan and the increase granted in March, were requested and the Finance Director has made that calculation. Finance Director Steve Livingston said the cost for five years will be \$3.9 million.

11. List of Rolling Stock - Councilman Shanklin requested this information and he has been provided a copy. If other members want copies, please advise and the report will be provided.

Baker said he thought Shanklin wanted a list of rolling stock and that was printed out but Shanklin wanted a list of the number of different types of equipment, and that would be presented. Shanklin said he also wanted the age of the equipment so everyone could see how many 12 and 15 year old pickups were being used.

12. Cost of weed eaters.

Ihler presented brochures and photographs of the 50 cc industrial weed eaters the crews use and said the cost estimate from Easton's Ace Hardware was \$585 each. The estimate was given recently when DOC crews were planning to work in alleyways. Smaller weed eaters are not advisable as the equipment is used many hours each day during peak season and smaller units would overheat and the crews would have to wait until they could be used again. This type of unit will have two to two and a half years.

Hanna asked if quotes were obtained from C & E. Ihler said when bids are advertised, we will get prices from the bidders

and recommend approval to the low bidder meeting specifications, so all interested firms can submit bids.

Mayor Powell asked for other questions. Moeller asked if another person was needed in Emergency Communications to dispatch E911 calls. Information Services Director Doug Wells said the funding for the part time employee was restored and that will be sufficient for the dispatch center.

Baker said anything that is added since the budget was balanced will reduce some other line item and the additions we have talked about would reduce the year end number June 30, 2001 reserve and that is an estimate so we may have more or less at the end of the fiscal year but anything you add or subtract would affect it.

Budget reviews resumed as follows:

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT - The commercial refrigerator is needed for lab samples and required testing. Equipment being purchased from rolling stock was shown at the bottom of the first page for each division.

DRAINAGE MAINTENANCE - Shanklin asked for the list of where crews had been working.

WASTEWATER MAINTENANCE - Purchase of an ice machine will allow crews to get ice without taking tickets to local vendors to purchase. 50-70 lbs. of ice is needed daily for crews during extremely hot weather.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE - Riding mower will be used to mow on 3rd Street and on Texas Avenue. This was started at the request of businesses in the area since the City did not do a good job of keeping its own property in an attractive condition.

SOLID WASTE COLLECTION - Purchase of three packer trucks fits in with a good replacement schedule.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL - Costs will be presented in an agenda item. Water is being pumped out of the new area.

ANIMAL WELFARE - Smith encouraged pet adoption. Shanklin said too many animals are having to be put down and spay and neuter should be done, as well as publicity of this need.

SEWER CONSTRUCTION - Crews are on schedule with the necessary work. Purchase of a trench box was discussed as a way to create a safe working environment for the crews.

Purcell said about \$49,000 was added to the budget earlier by Council. He asked Baker where that would come from. Baker said he would reduce the projected carryover.

POLICE UNIFORM DIVISION - In response to a question, Police Chief Bill Adamson compared the number of officers to those from the previous year and the reassignments. Grant funding should not be impacted. A vehicle replacement schedule was discussed; about 16 units per year are needed. Eight police sedans, four motorcycles and four sedans with equipment are requested, with grant funding anticipated to be received for some of the units.

POLICE TRAINING - Dictation equipment is being used but is not working as well as had been hoped.

Shanklin asked how much will be spent at the lakes. Adamson said it should be about the same as last year. Shanklin said he would like to know the amount for salaries and equipment, and said there were 11 police vehicles and one officer on Monday. Shanklin asked for the amount spent for police patrol at the lakes this past weekend, as well as the number of tickets written and number of vehicles used.

FIRE PREVENTION - Baxter said some arson investigations are two years old and still have not been completed. He suggested an additional assistant fire marshal be hired to work these cases. Mayor Powell asked if the State provides assistance when arson is suspected. Fire Chief Don Barrington said they do when a death is involved but otherwise they expect each community to handle their own investigations. Chief Barrington was asked if this new position was needed and which position he would request as the most needed. Barrington said he needed a deputy fire chief. Shanklin pointed out that the number of fires was down and we have not grown that much. Discussion was held on the need for each of these positions, the cost and the amount of equipment that will be required along with each of the employees.

MOVED by Purcell, SECOND by Baxter, to authorize adding two people to the Fire Department, an assistant fire marshal and an assistant fire chief.

Purcell said if the City Manager feels it is not possible to do this, he can bring back the costs involved and explain to Council. Devine pointed out that people within the ranks would likely be promoted to these positions, so costs would be lessened in that new hires would start at the bottom of the ranges and steps. Barrington agreed they would advertise within the department and if the best qualified person is a current employee, they would be promoted.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION by Shanklin, SECOND by Haywood, to look at this in next year's budget.

Baker said he thought the cost could be about \$120,000 additional and asked Livingston where he would recommend

coming up with the money. Livingston said some could be taken from reserves but not the entire amount. Baker said Council Contingency was not spent, and the preliminary budget was based on all of it having been spent, so funds could be found in that manner.

VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION: AYE: Shanklin, Haywood, Hanna. NAY: Moeller, Baxter, Smith, Devine, Purcell. SUBSTITUTE MOTION FAILED.

VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION: AYE: Moeller, Baxter, Smith, Devine, Purcell. NAY: Haywood, Hanna, Shanklin. MOTION CARRIED.

Purcell asked for staff to return the projected costs for vehicles and all actual costs in this regard. Mayor Powell said he did not want all of the funding to be taken from reserve for this expense.

Meeting recessed at 8:00 p.m. and reconvened at 8:10 p.m. with roll call reflecting all members present.

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Parks & Recreation Director Gary Salva provided a power point presentation concerning the entire department, services provided, reorganization and budget request. The reorganization establishes divisions of Parks & Grounds, Leisure Services and Arts & Humanities. Building Maintenance is a separate section under Administration. Leisure Services Division is made up of the Recreation Centers Section, Sports & Aquatics Section and RSVP Section & Marketing. Parks & Grounds Division is made up of Park Maintenance Section, Landscaping/Field Maintenance Section, and Cemetery Section. Arts & Humanities Division is made up of the Auditorium Section and Programs Section. Possible future transfer of the Lakes Division to Parks & Recreation was shown for a later date. The museum is not shown as a division since the City contributes through a contract but has no administrative responsibilities for operation.

Shanklin said Lawton provides \$5 million for services other than public works, police and fire, and that is an attempt to improve the quality of life. Mayor Powell said he liked the plans to provide service to the youth in the community. Purcell said it seemed that maintenance of buildings and mowing along roadways could be done by Public Works so Parks & Recreation could focus on its primary functions.

PARKS & RECREATION ADMINISTRATION - The pickup truck will be assigned to the Assistant Director who does not have a vehicle. The previous assistant was given a car allowance.

SPORTS & AQUATICS - An adequate number of lifeguards have been hired. Scoreboard at McMahon Complex needs adequate lighting. Score keepers should be asked not to watch their children while they are supposed to be keeping score as it causes errors and hard feelings.

LEISURE SERVICES - Day camps are located at the three recreation centers. Cost for a volleyball set up with sand is \$2,000.

MCMAHON AUDITORIUM - Grants from McMahon Foundation are not pursued on smaller items. Revenue from auditorium admissions goes to the Authority and to the City so the Authority funds some capital items.

PARK MAINTENANCE - Driving in parks and using park property for personal use will be checked into by the City Manager.

ATHLETIC FIELD MAINTENANCE - 28 fields are maintained by four employees, with seasonal help during the summer. The reorganization should provide for more crews to help with this task as landscaping and athletic field maintenance will be combined and focused as needed during the year. Costs of riding mowers and various types of mowers were compared within this division and other divisions due to the wide variance in costs. Special features of equipment were enumerated.

Smith said he turned in his lap top computer this afternoon, and it could be assigned to Parks & Recreation Administration rather than buying another one for them. Baker will make note. Baker said he would assume the department reorganization for Parks & Recreation was approved and that he recommended approval. There was no objection.

Mayor Powell suggested the pay for officials for baseball and softball games be reviewed as Lawton's seems to be lagging in both amount and speed of payment as compared to surrounding communities.

Baker said the EAC representative had to leave and he reviewed the requests of the EAC. After discussion, a consensus was to leave the 3% cost of living increase funding in the budget for general employees. Retirement contribution increase will be considered next year or during the year if needed. An additional holiday was not granted. The public hearing on the budget will be held on June 13 and EAC members, or any others, may address the Council at that time concerning the preliminary budget. Should the budget not be adopted on June 13, special meetings will be required so the budget can be adopted in a timely fashion prior to the end of the fiscal year.

There was no further business to consider and the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. upon motion, second and roll call vote.

